

NEWS RELEASE

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Shelby County Illinois Man Charged with Internet Distribution of Child Pornography

Springfield, IL - Rodger A. Heaton, United States Attorney for the Central District of Illinois, announced that a federal grand jury has returned an indictment charging Jason Whitten, age 28, of Moweaqua, Illinois with operating a file server to advertise, distribute, and receive thousands of child pornography images via the Internet.

The indictment alleges that beginning about January 2005 and continuing until June 22, 2005, collectors and distributors of child pornography in the U.S. and worldwide visited Whitten's file server to distribute and receive images and movie files of child pornography. A file server, often known as an "f-serve," is a computer configured by the user, through use of special software, to permit selected files to be downloaded by the public, to allow the public to upload files to that computer, and to advertise on specific Internet Relay Chat channels a willingness to receive or distribute files.

From January 30, 2005 to April 22, 2005, the indictment alleges Whitten advertised his file service making a collection of several thousand images and movie files of child pornography available to the public.

Whitten was charged in a criminal complaint filed on February 14, 2005, and was ordered detained pending trial. If convicted, the statutory penalty for the offense of advertising child pornography for distribution is a minimum 15 years to 30 years in prison, and a fine of up to \$250,000; for shipping and transporting child pornography, the penalty is a minimum five years to 20 years in prison and a fine of \$250,000.

(More)

The charges are the result of an investigation by the Springfield, Illinois office of the U.S. Secret Service in coordination with the U.S. Secret Service Electronic Crimes Task Force in New York. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney John Childress in the Springfield Division of the U.S. Attorney's Office.

Members of the public are reminded that an indictment is merely an accusation; the defendant is presumed innocent unless proven guilty.

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